

TEXT OF LETTER FROM FRANCIS G. POWERS  
TO THE NEW YORK TIMES  
(Printed in the 24 September 1960 Edition)

To the Editor of the New York Times  
New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I was given the opportunity of reading the article printed in the New York Times on August 27, in which it was said that during an interview my father said that I do not believe that I was shot down.

Obviously my father did not properly understand my answers during my trial. I should like to clear up this misunderstanding, and say that although I did not see what caused the explosion, I am sure that the plane did not blow up by itself. All the instruments which showed the functioning of the motor were in complete order up to the time of the explosion, which I both felt and heard. I also saw an orange flash when I looked down.

I am not sure, but I think that the explosion occurred behind the plane, or perhaps to the right. I did not feel any blow whatever on the surface of the plane. Therefore I think that the destruction of the plane was caused by shock wave.

I can only guess what happened after this. I think that at first the tail of the plane was torn off, causing the nose to drop, as a result of which the wings were torn off. The cockpit and the remaining parts of the plane began to fall in a spin, and because of the acceleration of the free fall I could not eject myself. Finally I got out of the plane at a height of 14,000 feet or lower. I indicate this height, since my parachute opened automatically, and it was set to open at this height. It opened immediately after I had jumped from the plane.

As I said at my trial, when the explosion occurred I was flying at the maximum height. This was at a height of 68,000 feet.

I am sure that my father did not properly understand my words during the trial, and if that is so, then perhaps there are other people who also did not understand me properly. I hope this letter will clear up any misunderstanding about this question.

My father did understand me properly when I said that when all this is over I am coming home. I am really going to return home, and I pray that I shall not have to stay in prison for ten years. Excuse me for troubling you, but I consider it essential to clarify the question of what really happened.

Yours sincerely,

Francis Gary Powers